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AUTHOR	Hyde, William
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ABSTRACT

Intended to help state planners, this paper focuses on the availability of information regarding the economic and demographic characteristics of adults and their participation and interest in instructor-directed lifelong learning. The first secion identifies sources of data on the economic and demographic conditions of adults that may be of use to planners in determining lifelong learning program needs, especially the Adult Education Participation Survey and Current Population Survey reports. Usefulness and limitations of these data are noted. The second section speculates on the implications that some of these data have for planning state level policies for lifelong learning. In section 3 are discussed shortfalls that might be encountered in designing surveys or interpreting survey results, including omission of appropriate information/questions, omission of tuition and fee or student cost information from surveys, failure of sampling designs to include a sufficient number of subjects, and inconsistencies within surveys. Section 4 makes these general observations about the future of lifelong learning as it relates to statewide planning: growth in the number of adults shows potential for more participation, financial support for lifelong learning activities will influence enrollments, disposition of state politicians toward lifelong learning is important to funding, and progress in planning and funding will be uneven. (YLB)

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Working Paper No. 37

DATA SOURCES ON THE ECONOMIC, DEMOGRAPHIC AND EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

by

William Hyde

Education Finance Center
Education Commission of the States
1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300
Denver, Colorado 80295
(303) 830-3654

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

I. NATIONAL SOURCES OF DATA ON THE ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CONDITIONS OF ADULTS 3

II. IMPLICATIONS OF CURRENT DATA FOR STATE-LEVEL PLANNING 7

III. SURVEY DESIGN: ILLUSTRATIONS FROM STATE OR REGIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SOURCES 11

IV. COMMENTS ON THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAM NEEDS 15

A FINAL NOTE 17

Appendix A 18

References 19

INTRODUCTION

By almost any definition, lifelong learning is a broad concept. "Lifelong learning includes, but is not limited to, adult basic education, continuing education, independent study, agricultural education, business education and labor education, occupational education and job training programs, parent education, postsecondary education, preretirement and education for older and retired people, remedial education, special educational programs for groups or for individuals with special needs, and also educational activities designed to upgrade occupational and professional skills, to assist business, public agencies, and other organizations in the use of innovation and research results, and to serve family needs and personal development." "It covers formal, nonformal and informal patterns of education....It is also characterized by flexibility of time, place, content and techniques of learning" (Higher Education Act of 1965 and Dave, 1976, quoted in Cross, 1981, pp. 255-256).

With such a broad scope, few statements can be made that are valid for all dimensions of lifelong learning. Generally, discussion is limited to certain aspects of lifelong learning, dictated by (1) the concerns of policymakers, (2) the interests of those providing lifelong learning opportunities or (3) the availability of data. So that this paper may be better focused, it also is limited in several ways.

First, this paper is meant to help state planners. Emphasis in this report is given to the concerns of planners -- examining issues of who participates and under what conditions -- more than to issues of what should be offered and how (more frequently a concern of providers) although there is substantial overlap.

Second, the focus of this report is upon the availability of information regarding the economic and demographic characteristics of adults and their participation and interest in lifelong learning. Consequently, all pre-adult lifelong learning is excluded. Furthermore, since adults in lifelong learning are often considered persons 18 years old or older enrolled in an educational program on a less than full-time basis, this definition will be loosely applied in this report although it will be convenient to stray from this definition in discussing some issues.

And third, attention is restricted to instructor directed lifelong learning programs. Although it has been estimated that self-directed programs constitute 60 percent of all learning activities, they occur largely beyond the control of public policymakers and therefore are not included in this report.

This paper contains four principal sections. In the first section, I identify sources of data on the economic and

demographic characteristics of adults in education that state planners can use to consider lifelong learning program needs, and I comment on the usefulness and limitations of these data. In the next section, I speculate on the implications that some of these data have for planning state level policies for lifelong learning. In section III, I mention various shortfalls that might be encountered in designing surveys or in interpreting survey results. The last section briefly comments on the future of lifelong learning as it relates to statewide planning.

I. NATIONAL SOURCES OF DATA ON THE ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CONDITIONS OF ADULTS

At first blush it appears as though there are numerous sources of data on adult students. Commonly cited sources of data include the decennial Census, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Current Population Survey (CPS) reports, the Adult Education Participation Survey (AEPS) plus the work of a number of researchers including the American Institutes for Research (AIR), Cross (1981), Johnstone and Rivera (1965), Penland (1977) and Solmon et al. (1979). However, few of these sources are primary, recurring sources of data. Most data are drawn from two national surveys.

One is the AEPS, a triennial survey, conducted by the Bureau of Census for the NCES. The survey questions are added as a May supplement to the CPS, which surveys a sample of about 60,000 households. The first AEPS was undertaken in 1969, and the most recent, available one is for 1978. Unfortunately, due to bureaucratic delays, the report has not yet been published, but some information has been released (see, for example, Chapter 6 in the 1980 Condition of Education), and computer tapes are available from the Bureau of the Census. The 1981 survey, completed in May, will not be available until mid-1982.

The survey contains a wealth of information, including the following:

number of adults in education
student status of adults
student age, sex, race, marital status
highest level of education completed
annual family income
region and metropolitan resident status
employment status
occupation
subject matter of course taken
main reason for taking course
credit or certification objectives, if any
participant evaluation of course
type of institution providing the education
source of payment for course
delivery mechanism used for course content
distance to meeting place for course
main reason for dropping course, if dropped

In the published final report for each survey, various crosstabulations are made. For those possessing data processing capabilities, data tapes, available at a price of $110 per tape, allow more detailed analysis useful for addressing specific

issues. The sample will support regional analysis of a general nature and provides information on 44 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA) although reliability of the data is not good for most SMSAs.

Usefulness of the AEPS is greater for some types of analysis than for others. Lack of uniform selection criteria and lack of comparability of questionnaires among surveys renders trend analysis of dubious value. In the 1969 and 1972 surveys, the criterion for inclusion or exclusion of an individual was ambiguous and may have led to inconsistent responses. The 1975 survey excluded full-time, nontraditional high school and college students of 17 or more years of age. The 1978 survey, in addition, omitted full-time students participating in occupational programs of six months or more duration. The 1981 survey further restricted the sample by eliminating those occupational programs of less than six months' duration. The constraints on analysis imposed by not having comparable sampling criteria across surveys can be partially overcome with appropriate programming of computer tapes to create comparable subsamples with the data base, but comparisons of published data based on all respondents are misleading.

In addition to not consistently defining the samples, the last two surveys do not include the same questions. To cut the time needed to prepare the final report, and possibly out of budgetary considerations, the number of questions and the amount of information obtained on the 1981 survey was reduced from that contained in the 1978 survey. (Appendix A gives a comparison of the information in the 1978 and 1981 surveys.)

The second source of information on adult characteristics and enrollment, also related to the CPS, is the October supplement which asks about school and college enrollment. It differs from the AEPS May supplement in several important ways.

1. The October supplement on enrollment is administered annually, while the AEPS is given triennially.

2. The October supplement appears to apply a more consistent selection definition among survey years than the AEPS and includes enrollment in both schools and colleges.

3. The two supplements collect different information. The May supplement includes such things as the type of programs taken and the student's motivational and educational interests in taking a course. The October supplement is restricted to more objective information of what grade or year the student is attending, the type and control (public or private) of the institution attending,

the course load taken, the major field of study, and the distance, time and mode of transportation required to get to class.

Substantial information has been obtained from these supplements. One analysis, at the school level, examined the hypothetical distribution of a tuition tax credit for parents with school children (Jacobs, 1980). Another study, at the postsecondary level, examined the age and related demographic characteristics of students attending community colleges and four-year institutions (Hyde, 1980b). The analysis showed that older students attend community colleges more frequently than four-year institutions and that among students of a similar age, community college students have more adult attributes (e.g., greater family commitments and employment responsibilities) than students attending four-year institutions.

In sum, the CPS survey, with its supplements, is the primary, and most popular, recurring source of data on adults in education and their economic and demographic characteristics.

Another recurring source of data is the decennial U.S. Census. The main advantage of this source of data is that it includes all residents of the United States, allowing analysis at the state, regional and local level. The main disadvantages are that (1) the detail of information gathered is less than the CPS, (2) the Census is undertaken only once a decade, (3) published reports of data analysis appear several years after the Census year and (4) individual use of Census tapes is a large undertaking not practical for most state agencies. Because detailed reports on demographics and economic and education status of the state populations from the 1980 Census will not be available for perhaps another year and because there is little opportunity to manipulate the data for one's own needs, no further consideration is given in this report to this source of data.

There are other surveys that also provide useful information, but their primary purpose may be peripheral to an examination of the characteristics and educational activities of adults, or they are special surveys undertaken only once -- after a few years their value to policymakers is diminished. A few of the important national surveys are mentioned briefly.

One is drawn from the annual survey of college freshmen undertaken jointly by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA and the American Council on Education. While the majority of freshmen are of conventional college age, some are older, and Solmon et al. (1980) have examined a group of these adult students who are first-time, full-time freshmen over 21 years of age. Solmon et al. examined the demographic characteristics and education needs of the adult sample and made several comparisons with the traditional freshmen group, drawn from the annual freshmen norm

survey results. A key drawback of this sample is that it excludes part-time students, nonfreshmen and returning students -- students who compose probably more than half of the adult student population.

Other surveys include that by the Commission on Non-Traditional Study in 1972 and by Johnstone and Rivera in 1965. These studies tried to identify the full scope of learning activities, instructor centered as well as self directed, offered by a full range of providers, including educational institutions as only one of many providers. Examples of special purpose surveys include AACJC's report on the number of continuing education enrollments in community, junior and technical colleges (Gilbert, 1980) and the survey on cooperative arrangements between community colleges and community based groups (Gilder and Rocha, 1980).

II. IMPLICATIONS OF CURRENT DATA FOR STATE-LEVEL PLANNING

It is often fun and always hazardous to speculate on the future. In education, making accurate predictions is particularly difficult. Historically, the largest influences in the education arena have come from outside the educational system. The Morrill Act of 1862, the G.I. Bill, the Brown v. Board of Education decision, the National Defense Education Act, and even the Higher Education Act of 1965 with its amendments, resulted from societal concerns for national economic development, compensation of soldiers, racial justice, national defense and individual social justice. Probably none of these events would have been predicted a few years before they occurred.

We are no more likely to predict accurately for the 1980s than has been done in the past; yet the effort should be made. We may be no better off having planned, but we certainly will be worse off if we do not plan.

By way of this apologetic introduction, I emphasize the importance of considering not just education and education related factors but key societal changes as well in trying to sketch the 1980s prospects for lifelong learning in the states. Before turning to some specific economic and demographic data to see what the implications are for adult lifelong learning, mention should be made of two national forces that will have a pervasive influence on education.

One factor is the conservative economic climate that is manifested in tax and spending limitations initiated in many states and, more broadly, in the election of Ronald Reagan. In education, this fiscal conservatism has placed a new priority on institutional and state concerns; issues of individual concern are waning. Issues of student access and choice, popular in the 1970s, are no longer key government concerns. They have been replaced by concern for quality, competence, accountability and fiscal soundness. As long as this conservative mood persists, we will have to change our expectations of what the government is willing to finance. With much of the budget allocated to "uncontrollables" legislated by Congress, the discretionary education funds are a prime candidate for legislative budget cuts, and within education lifelong learning will probably be one of the first among many.

The second factor is the progress in communication technology which will revolutionize the delivery of education. Within five years, much of the informal, occasional lifelong learning activities that adults undertake will be available to them through their homes. While adults will benefit significantly from these technological advances, it is uncertain what role will be played

by public higher education institutions and public education agencies. Private enterprise may have an increasing role, particularly given the fiscally conservative stance of government.

Available economic, social and demographic data provide a limitless number of opportunities to speculate on likely future conditions in adult education. Although the same data can sometimes be used to argue both sides of an issue, a few impressions of likely situations are presented here for illustration. Attention is given to the three conventional age groups of citizens -- youths, middle-aged adults and older adults. The data are drawn primarily from the 1978 AEPS and The Condition of Education. Information is also drawn from several of the publications listed among the references. Each scenario is only one of several that could be developed from each set of circumstances. Each scenario suggests a potential for the involvement of lifelong learning activities, but each also has certain limitations.

Youths will be catered to more than ever before. With a 26 percent decline in the size of the 18-year-old cohort between 1979 and 1994, colleges and universities will recruit among this group more intensely than in the past. However, these youths will also be sought by labor and the military. There will be fewer candidates for entry level jobs; consequently beginning wages will be bid up. While more capable individuals may prefer to continue their formal education, obtaining undergraduate and graduate degrees, other youths less inclined toward schooling will be attracted to the job market, although they may need additional training or retraining or seek further education after an initial employment period.

There could, however, develop a divergence in the participation of adults in education. Although the median school years completed by the civilian labor force has increased from 12.0 to 12.6 in the last 20 years (between 1959 and 1979), those that seek a college education or an advanced degree are also those most likely to participate in adult education. In 1978, the 29 percent of the population (17-years-old and over) that had some college experience constituted 57 percent of the participants in adult education. The 34 percent of the adult population that had less than a high school education formed only 10 percent of the participants in adult education. To interest these individuals in further education, opportunities will have to be attractive.

The educational opportunities will have to be designed to meet their needs in terms of both (1) curricular content and (2) scheduling of instruction and delivery of services. Many of those who decide to leave school without adequate education are those who, upon returning at a later time, need remedial and developmental assistance. The need for these programs will increase. Minorities, who often are educationally disadvantaged, are increasing in number faster than the population at large. The

number of Black and Hispanic students has doubled since 1970.

Furthermore, individuals who leave school generally have more constraints on their time imposed by family obligations and employment responsibilities, which require them to shift their priorities. A reflection of this is the difference in preference between adults and youths for correspondence courses. Ten times as large a proportion of adults as youths are interested in this type of instructional arrangement (Hyde, 1980a).

In sum, youths hold two prospects for lifelong learning. One group, composed of those seeking more and more education, will require specialized, high level or professional education. Members of the other group, despite probably increasing efforts to attract and retain them in school and higher education, will leave school inadequately prepared for long term employment and their adult responsibilities. Special efforts will be required to deal with these young adults.

Changes in the size, composition and expectations of the family are one of the most significant sociological phenomena of several decades. Improvements in birth control techniques and a diminution in the interest to have children has resulted in a dramatic decline of fertility to an historically low rate of less than two per woman. There are indications that the fertility rate will drop further. Through divorce and other options regarding living arrangements about one of every two children is raised by a single parent at some point in his or her childhood. More women choose to work or must work. A growing proportion of women without children prefer to work in the labor market than at home, and more women decide to seek employment rather than to remain at home. Half of all women work now, and for the first time there are as many women as men in higher education. Over two-thirds of the participants in adult education are between 25 and 54, and more than half of them are women. In 1978, women took 58 percent of all the courses in adult education. Participants in adult education who were 25 to 34 years old took 38 percent of the courses, but they took 45 percent of the courses that were taken for the purpose of getting a new job.

This group will remain an important sector for adult education, and education planners should consider the education interests of these people as well as the support services they need to take advantage of the education programs.

Retired and senior citizens have the greatest <u>potential</u> for swelling the ranks of lifelong learning. The potential arises from the fact that (1) the rate of participation currently is small and could increase dramatically under certain conditions and (2) the number of older adults is increasing. In 1978, adults 55 years old or older accounted for 28 percent of the adult population but less than 10 percent of adult education courses

taken. In 1970 there were less than 40 million people 55 years old or older, and by 1990 there probably will be 50 million.

However, a realistic potential for this group must be less than is indicated by the population count. Many older people may be senile, not willing to leave home or simply not interested in additional educational activities. Of those who may be interested, other factors will influence their participation. Curricular offerings, the convenience of facilities and means of delivery and availability of funding will affect enrollments. The fiscal stance of state governments to subsidize the programs or to support the students directly (through reduced tuition charges or tuition waivers) will be the key to their participation. It will be a particularly important determinant if the incomes of retired people are reduced, as is likely given that the social security retirement system is on the verge of bankruptcy due to an expansion of the number of individuals eligible for benefits and a contraction of the number of individuals supporting the system through payroll contributions. Participation in education by this group is a discretionary activity, very sensitive to costs and ability to pay. A reasonable scenario is to expect only a modest increase in older adults' participation; a greater involvement must rely upon a change in conditions that is not expected.

III. SURVEY DESIGN: ILLUSTRATIONS FROM STATE OR REGIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SOURCES

The value of a survey and the importance of its timeliness depends upon the issue addressed. If the purpose is to estimate the number of individuals likely to enroll in a proposed program, then it is important that the description of the characteristics of the population upon which the estimates are based is accurate and that the specifics of the program offering are explicitly identified. Changes occur in populations and in the circumstances under which education programs are given and will fundamentally affect enrollment estimates. Therefore, current, specific survey data are required for these purposes.

In contrast to using survey data for descriptive or enrollment projection purposes, survey data may be used to examine the conditions under which prospective students are likely to enroll. Inquiries of this sort -- to examine, for example, the effect of classroom location or student costs on attendance -- are inquiries that reveal basic human nature and individual preferences. They are fairly constant over time. The issue in these instances is to determine the underlying behavior. For example, adults have different priorities than conventional youth; adults value their time differently and that difference affects (1) the amount of time they are willing to travel to attend a course and (2) their preference for mechanisms of delivering instruction and conveying course content. For this type of study, the timeliness of data is less important. The main concern is finding a previous survey that offers the information needed to address the issue at hand. Difficulty in finding such surveys is probably the main reason that those making the inquiries end up designing their own surveys -- survey instruments designed by others and used for other purposes seldom meet one's own needs.

The primary purpose of local surveys of adult education needs is to gain information which will (1) identify educational interests in and need for new programs, (2) identify barriers to attendance or (3) identify the institutional environment (and possible competition) and the demand for a proposed new program. For an institution or state considering the need for providing adult lifelong learning opportunities, information specific to the proposed course or program is necessary as well as information about the context in which the course is to be offered. It is important to consider several groups of factors: (1) the characteristics and goals of the institution, (2) the nature and purpose of the course under consideration, (3) the education disposition and interests of the prospective student and (4) the various options that the prospective student has for obtaining elsewhere the anticipated benefits of the training or education. Each of these categories of factors requires collecting a large amount of information, and yet it is necessary if sound projections or forecasts of likely curricular needs are to be

made.

Unfortunately, while a considerable number of state level adult education surveys and many dozens of institutional adult needs assessment surveys have been undertaken, few of them serve as reliable guides for planning educational programs or give prospective providers of educational services sufficient information for making allocation decisions. The main reason is that they fail to ask appropriate questions in the surveys.

In an evaluation of the needs of nontraditional learners, Cross and Zusman (Stalford, 1979) reviewed 13 state or regional studies (including one national study). Individuals were asked about their interest in obtaining further education. Some surveys limited the question to the respondent's interest in further education during the next two years; others placed no limit on the period of time during which the individual might pursue further education. The percentage of students expressing an interest in obtaining further education varied widely between the two groups. Of the five studies that limited the inquiry to the student's interest during the next two years, an average of 38 percent said they were interested whereas 74 percent of the other respondents, not constrained by any time frame, stated that they were interested. Using the information contained in these latter surveys as the basis for a decision to offer new lifelong learning opportunities overstates the perceived need.

Another example of the omission of important information is found among state surveys and among institutional needs assessment surveys. Most of the time respondents are not asked about their willingness to pay for education programs. Survey results indicate that when they are asked, the number of individuals expressing an interest in obtaining further education declines dramatically (Hyde and Augenblick, 1980).

Overall, existing state and institutional data generated from adult education needs assessment surveys are highly variable in quality. While a planning agency should review existing assessment efforts in hopes that some may be useful to it, there are a number of caveats that a planning agency should take into consideration. First, the very nature of a questionnaire which asks the respondent to give answers for which he or she has no accountability produces overestimates of the amount of interest the respondent has in the education program about which he or she is being questioned. Respondents are influenced by what they think the interviewer wants to hear; respondents also prefer to appear to be in agreement with the interviewer and consequently are more apt to give an affirmative than a negative answer. Furthermore, when a respondent is asked if he or she would be interested in having more educational opportunities available, few people are inclined to say no.

The respondents may also give an answer which is perceived as protecting his or her potential interests. If a person is asked how much they think the student charge should be, the respondent may think that a high estimate might be considered as support for high tuition or fees. Individuals are reluctant to express the actual amount they are willing to pay for services and generally will understate the amount.

The hypothetical nature of needs assessment questions is unavoidable; however, more information about respondents' preferences could be obtained by asking questions involving choices about the conditions under which the respondent might enroll (see, for example, Hyde, 1980a). While this approach is still flawed, in that respondents may disguise their true preferences in the responses they give, the affirmative answer inclination is avoided.

A second shortcoming is the omission of tuition and fee or student cost information from surveys. All institutions charge tuition or fees and the structure of the tuition and fee schedules is a major policy issue at nearly all institutions. Inclusion of such an important component in a needs assessment seems necessary. There is certainly a large difference between the number of people who are likely to enroll in a course that is free and in one that has a $100 student charge. One possible explanation for the omission of such questions in most surveys may be that the institutions undertaking the surveys want to expand their curricula and seek favorable evidence of the need for providing additional educational services. Omitting such cost information from the survey and structuring the survey loosely provides responses that can be interpreted more favorably than might occur if the survey were structured to measure more precisely the magnitude and type of interest for education courses and educational services.

Third, the sampling designs of the surveys often fail to include a large enough number of individuals to estimate reliably the likely response of particular groups of people for specific types of programs. Furthermore, in studies involving larger samples, the data that are collected are not analyzed as extensively as they could be. Quite often information on who, how, what and where are not presented in detail, although we know, for example, that for an aspiring auto mechanic the preferred method of learning is "hands on" instruction and that adults working full-time prefer part-time attendance in the evening. Unfortunately, a common practice is simply to tally the distribution of answers to each question and occasionally to divide the distribution by key demographic or enrollment characteristics such as sex, race and part-time or full-time status of students. These limited crosstabulations, however, overlook many dimensions of the prospective interests of the population in educational programs. The information could be easily extracted from survey data. Another example of the underutilization of survey data is a

question about the use that could be made of child care facilities by prospective students. Obviously, the primary group of users is parents with young children, although they as a group are not separated from other respondents for examining their educational needs and program and scheduling preferences. In a similar vein, studies that identify the reasons of students attending particular institutions do not make distinctions of curricular interests among survey respondents.

Another caveat is to be aware of inconsistencies within surveys. For example, when respondents in one survey were asked their opinion of the convenience of the time that the college scheduled courses, 59 percent thought that it was excellent, and 38 percent thought that it was fair. Only 3 percent thought that it was poor. Yet, nearly one-third of the respondents said that time of the class was an obstacle to their enrolling (Lauth and Zabek, 1978, p. 6 and 9).

This apparent inconsistency partly reflects the different perspectives a respondent may take. When asked for an opinion of some service in the abstract, a respondent is more likely to answer in terms of what he or she thinks people in general might want, but when asked directly about his or her own involvement the answer reflects more personal reasons. Numerous occurrences of this type of response are found in surveys.

In sum, the results of needs assessment surveys must be interpreted and used cautiously. The way in which surveys are often designed, the hypothetical nature of the questions, and the psychological behavior and perspective of respondents all tend to indicate greater than actual need for or interest in educational programs and services. Unless highly structured and specifically structured, an education needs assessment can only provide general, not very meaningful, guidelines for program development.

A final comment on needs assessments is that while they can be useful, if properly designed, for identifying specific education needs, such as pinpointing educational programs that can be used for preparing skilled labor for employers, much of the planning for adult education and coordination of programs among institutions and institutional sectors that should occur, requires that needs assessment studies be undertaken at a level that encompasses the full range of education providers.

IV. COMMENTS ON THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Four general observations can be made about the future of lifelong learning as it relates to the interests of state planners.

1. The most visible potential for the prosperity of lifelong learning is the growth in the number of adults who might be interested in obtaining further education. One estimate is that if participation rates remain unchanged, enrollment of the population 25 and over will increase by 20 percent between 1978 and 1997 simply due to the growth of this segment of the population. When the preference of more educated people to seek more education is accounted for, enrollments of adults are expected to increase by another 25 percent (Carnegie Council, 1980). By 1983 students 25 or older may constitute 44 percent of all students (NCES, 1980). Other factors, such as the leisure time of senior citizens and the trend of requiring continuing education for licensure in many professions, may also swell the number of adults in education. The extent to which these projections are accurate, however, depends upon economic and political factors.

2. One of the key economic factors that will exert a heavy influence on enrollments is the financial support provided lifelong learning activities. Skepticism of the value of higher education has increased over the last few years and has diminished the willingness of taxpayers to support education and of individuals to pay for it themselves. Although lifelong learning encompasses many aspects of education, many people view it as a "frill" or at least as something well beyond a core curriculum for which there is generally more financial support than for peripheral educational activities. Undoubtedly public financial support will vary among regions, states and institutions depending upon economic circumstances and the historical development of public education in an area and the reputation and status of an institution. Although the trend in the value of education and public willingness to pay for it may be downward, there will be exceptions to this trend.

3. The disposition of state politicians toward lifelong learning is probably the most important factor that will determine the degree to which lifelong learning activities in a state are funded. The prospects may not be good, and currently they are uncertain. Recently a survey asked state educators and state legislators about the priority that lifelong learning had for them, and legislators rated it consistently lower than educators (Martorana, 1980). There are two plausible explanations for the different ratings. One is that legislators do not fully understand the significance of lifelong learning activities, in which case educators need to spend more time with their legislators informing them about lifelong learning. The other possibility is that legislators do understand and that the gap in

perception of the importance of lifelong learning reflects a difference in values. If this is the case, then the prospects for funding lifelong learning at the state level are not good.

4. Despite the three generalizations just made in this section, the last comment must be that progress in the planning and funding of lifelong learning will be uneven -- uneven among the states and uneven among lifelong learning activities. The importance of lifelong learning in a state depends on economic, demographic, historical and political factors. Each state will have to assess these factors for itself. Undoubtedly some lifelong learning activities will receive wide support while others will not.

Two areas in which some of the greatest amount of progress has been made are (1) providing tuition waivers for senior citizens and (2) linking education to industrial and commercial labor needs. Approximately half of the states have some provision for waiving tuition, generally for senior citizens. With a decline in the number of conventional college youth, the practice may spread, at least on a space available basis.

Over the last few years there has been a change in the social contract between, on the one hand, taxpayers and legislators and, on the other hand, private industry. In the past, it was felt that public finance of occupational training should stop short of providing industry specific training. Now, however, states are willing to finance employer specific training, justifying it in terms of aiding the state's economy by attracting business into the state, in the same way that a state will agree to provide other public services and tax breaks to induce employers to move into the state. These training opportunities benefit many adults, and these examples are just two of many arrangements that support lifelong learning.

A FINAL NOTE

In a sense, this paper has struck a pessimistic note: national data sources are few in number, many surveys contain flaws in design, existing data often are not analyzed as thoroughly as they might be, and the most important factors likely to affect state planning for lifelong learning are beyond the control of state education policymakers. Despite this situation, the intended tone is one only of caution rather than pessimism.

The changes affecting higher education in the 1980s are changes the U. S. higher education system has not previously ever experienced. They are fundamental changes that should force policymakers to question basic values of education. Lifelong learning, being a relatively new member to the family of educational services offered through public educational institutions, will be particularly scrutinized. Consequently, state-level planners for lifelong learning should proceed cautiously, basing their objectives on solid justifications -- not an easy task.

Appendix A

COMPARISON OF QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS IN THE 1978 AND 1981 SURVEYS OF ADULT EDUCATION

The list below paraphrases most of the questions asked on the May Supplement to the Current Population Survey. An "x" indicates the year that that question was included in the survey.

	1978	1981
Why did you take this course or activity?	x	x
What is the subject matter of course?		x
Credit or certification objectives?	x	x
Length of course?		
hours per week in class	x	
number of weeks	x	
Who provided the instruction?	x	x
public or private	x	
Provided by employer?	x	x
Who paid for the course?	x	x
Did employer pay?	x	x
How much did student/family pay for tuition and fees?	x	x
Means of instruction?	x	
Why drop out, if dropped out?	x	
Distance to meeting place?	x	

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